Untrained Self-Regulation in an Autonomous Learning Situation

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自律学習の状況下における初心者の自己調整

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Abstract :

　The current study evaluated the evolution of three participants' language learning study habits after being exposed to autonomous language learning approaches in their first year in university. Participants used an application called English Central (EC) to participate in an extensive listening (EL) program in which they had to complete certain listening-based tasks. The participants were interviewed about their strategy use and study habits. The interviews revealed self-reflection, strategy use while studying, opinions of English Central, and perspectives on autonomous learning compared to previous language learning experiences. Participants showed evidence of self-regulation and development of self-regulation despite the lack of explicit training.

要旨：今日の研究において、自主言語学習にさらされていた大学 1 回生 3 人の言語学習習慣の進化を証明しました。参加者は、English Central（EC）と呼ばれるスマートフォンアプリケーションを使用して、extensive listening（EL）プログラムに参加しました。インタビューでは、自己反省、学習戦略での使用、English Central においての意見、および以前の言語学習経験と比較した自主学習法が明らかになりました。参加者は、明確な訓練がないにもかかわらず、自主規制・自主規制における発展を結果として残しました。

Key words : self-regulation, strategy use, English Central, extensive listening

Literature Review

Learner Autonomy and Self-Regulated Learning

　Learning any skill requires a certain amount of dedication. Language learning is a lifelong pursuit that requires intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, appropriate strategy use, self-reflection, deliberate practice, and corrective feedback. Being an autonomous or self-regulated learner is a process of changing abilities and skills in order to accomplish specific goals (Zimmerman, 2002). In education this means setting goals, implementing successful learning strategies, monitoring performance, attributing success and failure to the correct causes, and predicting future success and adapting the appropriate strategies to avoid future failures (p.66). Najeeb (2012) suggested that in order to make use of autonomy, language learners need to own their learning, understand the purpose of the program, ac-

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cept responsibility, take initiative in completion of the tasks, have a positive attitude, have a capacity for reflection, and have a proactive attitude towards self-management and interaction with others (p.1240). On the other hand, there are sociocultural issues with the terms autonomy and self-regulation. Ertürk (2016) argued that the ideas of learner autonomy that have been promoted in the West may not be directly translatable to other learners in non-western cultures, arguing that autonomy training is necessary for language learners in other cultures. Little (2007) maintained that learner autonomy is developed over a long period of time and "few learners will arrive at their first class ready to take complete charge of their own learning ; for most, self-management in learning will be something they have to learn, to begin with by taking very small steps" (p.23). Zimmerman (2002) also argued that these skills and strategies do not pop-up *ex nihilo* in talented learners, they are dependent on the individuals' social interactions. They can be taught by teachers, parents, coaches, and other role models. Lai, Yeung, and Hu (2016) found through qualitative interviews that teachers expected to play a minimal role in in the language learners' autonomous learning, while students expected their teachers to play a much larger role. They concluded that teachers needed to tutor their learners in the appropriate metacognitive and cognitive strategies for them to get the most out of their autonomy.

In sum, the difference between self-regulation in language learning and autonomous learning is largely a distinction in category. Self-regulated learners are proactive in their learning because they know their own strengths and weakness. They must set specific, self-defined goals. In their efforts to accomplish these goals, they must implement learning strategies which work for them in that particular time and situation. Self-regulated learners know when these strategies are successful and when they are detrimental to their learning because they are always monitoring their own performance and discovering the reasons for their failures. Finally, this aspect of self-reflection and monitoring are essential to the learner when discarding unhelpful strategies and adjusting their approaches to learning to new situations. This Platonic ideal of a learner who sets their own goals, uses appropriate strategies, reflects on and monitors their own use of strategies, and adjusts their use of strategies to improve their learning outcomes is an autonomous learner. Autonomous language learners are most certainly self-regulated learners who set goals and make choices without the guidance or requirements set by a teacher. Autonomy is the end goal of instruction, while self-regulation is set of skills and strategies learners employ.

Technology to promote informal learning

With the invention of the internet, smartphones and other technological advances, language learners have more opportunities for self-regulated, self-directed, and autonomous learning than ever before. As Gremmo and Riley (1995) stated tape-recorders, TV, computers, newspapers, magazines, email, and resource centers provided language learners with a plethora of new methods to engage with their second language (L2). However, successful utilization of these new technologies require vigilant self-direction to make autonomy valuable. Technology use in and out of the classroom is a widely researched topic. Since Gremmo and Riley (1995), the technologies and resources for language teachers and learners has grown exponentially. Richards (2015) provided additional ways language learners can engage with their L2 outside of the classroom and many suggestions center around the use of technology ; chatrooms, social media involvement, self-access centers at universi-

ties, digital gaming, apps for language-specific and content-based incidental learning, and extensive listening and watching using online videos were just some of his suggestions. But a problem remains： How do teachers get learners to use the technology appropriately and to maximal effect?

Lai and Gu (2011), in a mixed-methods investigation of online self-regulated language learning, discovered that participants viewed informal, out-of-class learning using technology positively. Participants used dictionaries, wrote social media status updates, commented on classmates' social media messages, used YouTube to find interesting videos, and chatted with other classmates through SNS. Exploratory factor analysis of survey results concluded that students used technology enhanced self-regulation for six main purposes：

> To regulate emotions and enhance the attraction of learning； to plan, evaluate, and monitor their learning progress； to enhance social connections with and seek help from native speakers and other peer learners around the world； to encourage oneself to persevere and commit to the learning goal； to seek and expand learning resources； and to enhance cultural understanding. (p.325)

Using the survey results as a basis for the semi-structured interviews, the researchers discovered that participants' technology use changed over time in accordance with ability. As they gained higher proficiency, they would be able to use the same technology for a wider variety of purposes. Participants reported progressing from using technology only for entertainment to more specific language learning purposes. Those who used technology to regulate their own learning did so to differing degrees； digital literacy, metacognitive knowledge, and strategy usage were defining factors in the reported success of informal, online, self-regulated language learning through technology.

In 2013, Sockett looked at the online informal learning reports of female graduate students from a dynamic systems theory framework. He had students record their informal language learning encounters over three months in order to see how these language learners were engaging with their L2 in an informal learning environment. Similar to Lai and Gu's (2011) study, Socket (2013) found some participants chose to use chat and messaging functions on social media, some listened to music and discussed with their friends, while others watched television shows and movies. The range of input was wide, yet the participants' informal learning of English evolved through several phases. The author concluded that online informal learning is highly individualized and difficult to study. His approach helped illustrate the tasks and the intentions involved in informal language learning environments.

In a unique study, Lai, Hu, and Lyu (2018) were interested in what types of technology students used to facilitate language learning and what factors influenced the level of engagement. Using semi-structured interviews, an extremely detailed transcription and coding system, follow-up surveys based on the interview themes, and structural equation modeling, the authors concluded that there were three distinct types of technological experiences： (a) instruction-oriented experiences, (b) entertainment and information-oriented experiences, and (c) social-oriented experiences. A quantitative survey based on these three experience types was delivered to 439 language learners in Hong Kong and the USA. Lai et al. (2018) found that the same technology could be used for different purposes or experiences. For instance, Facebook was reportedly used in all three experience types.

The structural equation model found that these three experiences were influenced by different incentives, caused a variety of learner emotions and interactional behaviors, and were directly influenced by the language learners' attitude and affect (p.136). The authors called for further research into the nature of learners' out-of-class language learning experience with technology. While these studies are informative, they do not include purposely-built language study tools like English Central (EC). Nor do they include any report of research informed pedagogical approaches like extensive listening (EL).

Extensive Listening and English Central

Extensive listening is an autonomous language learning pedagogical approach which relies on listening to extensive amounts of comprehensible texts. The goal is that language learners use this approach to practice fluency development and automatization of bottom-up listening processes (Rost, 2016). The rapid development of information technology and the speed of the internet makes extensive listening an ideal approach for testing self-regulation and autonomous learning frameworks. In a self-regulated framework case study, Zeng and Goh (2018) followed four students over a semester while they participated in out-of-class extensive listening activities. They found that high achieving and low achieving students approached metacognitive and cognitive strategy use differently. In accordance with other research on strategy use in language learning, Zeng and Goh (2018) found high proficiency users tended to use top-down strategies like inferencing and predicting and are more aware of the strategies they could or should be using. Lee and Cha (2017) developed and tested participant self-regulation, metacognitive strategy usage, and listening ability in their study of 42 university students. Through analysis of listening test scores and artifact analysis of listening log books, they found that students made significant gains in listening with self-reflection and strategy awareness through these aproaches.

The purpose of the current study was, through the use of semi-structured interviews with three university students who have recently completed a year-long extensive listening program, to uncover their strategy use and study habits using English Central. English Central (EC) is a paid application that allows language learners unlimited access to appropriately leveled videos of varying lengths in English. I was interested in how students viewed EC as a learning tool and whether using it for a year had any lasting effects on their study habits. Based on these two angles of inquiry, I have developed three research questions :

RQ 1 : How did students use EC outside of class?
RQ 2 : In what ways has using EC changed participants' approaches to language learning?
RQ 3 : In what ways did students using EC show evidence of untrained self-regulation?

Method

Participants

Near the end of academic year, I explained the project briefly to students in three first-year oral communication classes. Students in these classes had participated in survey designed to measure student grit and motivation for language learning. I asked students to volunteer for a follow-up interview with me. The only condition would be students would have to meet me in my office on cam-

pus, so any student who did not live near campus or who would be unwilling to come to campus would be precluded from volunteering. By the end of the semester I received contact information from six female students and one male student willing to participate in the semi-structured and recorded interviews. These students were contacted by email and asked to sign-up for an interview time with me. I made sure to separate the interview slots to ensure enough time for each interview.

Three students were interviewed in the spring of 2019 and their interviews are discussed below. They were all international studies students and many of them are planning to study abroad in English speaking countries in the next two years. I taught all of these students in a speaking and listening focused course for one full year. I had a close relationship with these students and I was aware of their English proficiency. In my estimation, they were highly motivated and skilled students. This was evidenced by their willingness to come into school on their vacation for an English language interview.

Design

The current study is a follow-up interview inspired by a quantitative survey I asked them to complete in November, 2018. The content of the survey dealt with language learning grit, a psychological construct dealing with passion and perseverance for long term goals, and intrinsic motivation to study a foreign language. While the initial project did not include plans for follow-up interviews on a related topic, I thought that using the survey would be a good place to start in my discussion of self-regulated learning and their use of EC.

Interview Protocol

The full interview protocol can be found in Appendix A；however, the progression of the semi-structured interview is rather simple to explain. Because I know these students rather well and I have spent a year building rapport with them, I did not need to spend a lengthy amount of time warming up and gaining their trust. That being said, it is important to set the tone of the interview as casual. For this reason, I prefaced the interview sessions with a short introduction to the project. Additionally, I provided them with the informed consent form in Japanese (L1) so they understood the risks and benefits of participating in the study.

Even though I have already said that I knew these students well, I was not familiar with each students' language learning history. All of the students come from a very different high school background. I thought that if I wanted to find out about the students current study habits, it would be important to take a detailed account of their high school English courses and study habits.

After inquiring about their high school experiences, I asked about their experiences in their language courses at university. While I am aware of their assignments and proficiency in the communication and writing classes, I am less familiar with the assignments and teaching styles in the intensive and extensive reading courses. Lastly, I inquired specifically about their opinions and usage of EC. As stated in research question two, I am interested in how EC has affected their study habits. EC is designed to help foster autonomous or self-regulated English listening and vocabulary practice. The application on their smartphone is supposed to help foster these good study habits.

Transcription Approach

As for transcription, I used a modified conversation analysis (CA) framework. Pauses, hesitations, and reformulations were not essential to the present research questions, therefore they were not transcribed. However, I paid attention to interviewer-interviewee interaction, specifically talk over. It is important to let the interviewee talk. It is possible for the interviewer to bias the interviewees' opinions. It was my intention to record the opinions and perspectives of my participants while injecting as little personal bias as possible.

I employed an automatic subtitling and captioning system for transcription. This approach allowed editing, exporting, and finalizing transcriptions in a relatively short amount of time using Google's voice recognition algorithms and YouTube's subtitle editor. For this study, I used a combination of automatically generated transcriptions based on Google's Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) algorithms through the YouTube video uploading service and traditional transcription methods. The process requires the user to upload a video file to YouTube and the ASR algorithms will develop a 90% accurate transcription in the form of subtitles (Këpuska & Bohouta, 2017). After the subtitles were generated, they were easy to edit within the YouTube editor suite for speaker identification, punctuation, and turn taking.

After the data were edited, it was exported into Excel for coding. This method has resulted in an extreme reduction in the time necessary to transcribe and format interview data. Novice transcribers, using traditional transcription software and keyboard shortcuts, can take up to five hours to transcribe a 20-minute interview. With this technique, I have been able to transcribe similar length interviews in less than three hours.

Coding

Once the data were imported into Excel, I generated themes and codes to identify informative responses to the interview questions. The participants' responses were classified into in vivo codes, which were placed into broader themes related to self-regulation－goal setting, self-reflection, strategy use, strategy adjustment, and reflections on materials－and study experiences－EC use, EC opinions, future use of EC, and future plans to practice listening skills without EC.

Results

The following transcripts are taken from interviews with three participants in the study. In these transcripts, instances of Japanese language use are included and transliterated into English in italics. Translations are included in the same line within single parentheses. Double parenthesis contain my own comments to make clear what the participant is saying or non-verbal utterances like laughter. The participants' names, institutional names, and names of third parties have been redacted and replaced with participant numbers.

RQ 1 : How did students use EC outside of class?

In response to the first research question, participant 1 (S1) stated that she only used EC to achieve the goals set by the curriculum. In line 54 of the original interview, when asked to describe her English class and EC, she stated that she did not use EC for pleasure or to practice listening skills. She merely used it to meet the weekly course requirement of five videos, 50 vocabulary

words, and 50 spoken lines (EC_Interview_S1, lines 51-58)：

51　S1：Ah, English central
52　S1：*Nanyaro* (what is it?) ((making a hand motion trying to remember something))
53　IN：What does that hand motion mean?
54　S1：**Gojyu gojyu gojyu (fifty fifty fifty)**
55　IN：Only the set goals?
56　S1：Mm-hmm. set goals.
57　IN：Oh you didn't do anymore?
58　S1：Mm-mm ((meaning no))

Additionally, she mentioned on multiple occasions that the content of EC was not to her liking. In lines 123-132, S1 and I encountered a breakdown in communication when she used a term in Japanese which I had never heard, *konomi ga katayotteru.* During the interview, the meaning of the phrase was never made clear；however, after transcribing the data and consulting with three native speakers of Japanese, it appears that the phrase translates loosely to *not to my liking* in English. It is clear after transcribing the data, she was making sure that her opinion about EC was recorded, even though she was not able to do it fluently in English. While EC has a myriad of videos to choose from, the videos she chose to watch were not *her cup of tea.* This may have been due to the way she chose her videos. As will be discussed later, S1 chose difficult videos from EC in order to satisfy the vocabulary requirements, without paying attention to the content：

122　Could you tell me your opinions of English central?
123　S1：English Central? . . .
124　　the thema of the video of English Central is not so interesting for me
125　IN：hmm
126　S1：because its. . . *nante katayotteru (what is it, unbalanced?)*
127　IN：Short?
128　S1：*katayotteru.(unbalanced)*
129　IN：What does that action mean?
130　S1：**Konomi ga katayotteru (It's not to my liking)**
131　IN：Okay,
132　S1：**Konomi ga katayotteru. (unbalanced) ((laughter))** *Nante iutai yaro (what am I trying to say?)*

In the interview with participant 2 (S2), he brought up additional issues with EC use. When asked about this opinion of the application and the study program, he discussed the importance of individual motivation and self-regulation when using a program like EC. In lines 51 and 52, he acknowledged the importance of regulating one's own motivation and study habits. Here S2 showed a surprising amount of self-reflection as he was clearly aware of his personal motivational limitations (EC_Interview_S2, Line 51-52)：

51   S2： Yeah, it's a good app to study English but I'm I don't like homework so **if the student had ambition to improve their English skills it's really good** but other

52   **students who doesn't have ambitions like me it's tough work**

Participant 3 (S3) had a different perspective of English Central. When asked to give her opinion, she identified that the value of EC was that it exposed students to different content and point of views. In her comments, she discussed learner autonomy directly. She said that the application allowed her to choose the videos she preferred. This perspective was completely opposite to S1's opinion who said she was not interested in any of the videos she watched. S3 also said, "we can learn many things from English Central. And there are many history- and there are many topics and for example, history or trips or countries and it- these were very fun" (EC_Interview_S3, lines 106-110).

Like S1, S3 also found the feedback offered by the speaking tasks to be especially useful. In lines 174-177 she discussed how the EC pronunciation evaluation software felt like "there were a small teacher in my smartphone" (line 176). Even though all three students complained about the inaccuracy of the pronunciation scoring mechanism, they seemed to enjoy the repeat viewings followed by a quantitative pronunciation score. The application also gives specific segmental feedback individualized to the users' mistakes. The image painted by S3 of a small pronunciation teacher inside of her smartphone is an apt one.

RQ 2： In what ways has using EC changed participants' approaches to language learning?

This question cannot be adequately answered because there is no way of determining a causal link between using EC for one year and any change in behaviors. However, it is possible to find out how the participants studied listening on their own in high school and compare that to what they were doing now to practice their English listening skills. In high school, S1 reported that she only studied grammar and briefly joined a *juku,* or cram school, to prepare for university entrance examinations in her final year. When asked if she watched movies or videos or listened to music in English while a high school student, she said she did nothing of the sort. Though after finding out that she got into the international studies program in university, she began reading easy graded readers for pleasure. When I asked her to talk about her university experience in the last year, she began discussing how she liked to practice studying English in her free time. In lines 46-72, S1 said, "In the spring semester, I didn't study English so much . . . only during that class." When probed regarding her current state of English study after the fall semester had finished, S1 said that she was doing two things in particular. In line 65-68, she exclaimed that she uses practice tests from the TOEFL ITP test in order to study for future standardized tests. In line 69, she declared her love for a particular type of YouTube video, Anne Hathaway interviews.

46   S1： (laughter) In the spring semester

47   I didn't study English so much.

48   IN： Yeah.

49   S1： Only during that class.

61   S1： these days [I start to]

62	IN： [yeah, now?]
63	S1： *nante iutai, mondai wo toku (what do I want to say, to solve questions)*
64	IN： Practice answers?
65	**S1： Un, practice answers for＝**
66	**IN： from a textbook?**
67	**S1： ＝Toefl ITP test**
68	IN： okay, so now self-practice
69	**S1： And these days I watch Youtube**
70	IN： okay
71	S1： **of Anne Hathaway.**
72	IN： What does that mean?
73	S1： Anne Hathaway.
74	IN： Yeah
75	S1： I like her.
76	IN： So only her videos you watch?
77	S1： Not only. Not only, but mainly [mainly] Anne Hathaway.

After a lengthy discussion, it was made clear that S1 did not just like interviews with Anne Hathaway, but she really enjoyed watching celebrity interviews on the Ellen DeGeneras TV program. The learning habits and profile started to become clear. S1's distaste for EC was not due to her dislike of studying or watching English content, but that the content she found on EC was not what she wanted. After realizing that she was not going to enjoy the EC content, she resigned herself to completing the task in order to meet the requirements of the course.

When asked if she thought EC helped her study more outside of class, her response was non-committal. She found that "to practice speaking English, it's efficient" (line 178), but "to improve listening skills, it's not so efficient in my case" (line 246).

Similarly to S1, S2 also did not have much experience studying listening outside of the classroom when he was a high school student. Though he did mention being motivated by taking standardized tests like EIKEN. For general English skills, S2 believed that his skills increased as a result of preparing for EIKEN and through vicarious self-efficacy or jealousy of his bilingual teacher.

12	After EIKEN my English skills improved significantly
13	IN： what happened
14	**S2： I don't know I got interested in English**
15	IN： okay what did you do to to improve your skills?
16	S2： I I didn't like writing section
17	yes so I wrote many many and submitted to my English teacher. see she was
18	**bilingual so and she spoke really good English and I was jealous**
19	IN： okay did you do any other kind of self practice in high school
20	**S2： nothing special but I didn't sleep in English classes**
21	IN： okay that's something
22	S2： special yes for me okay

Here S2 showed his self-regulation again. He found a weakness in his writing ability and attempted to overcome that weakness by repeated practice. When asked about other studying habits in high school, the only special strategy he employed for listening and speaking practice was to not sleep in his English classes (EC_Interview_S2, line 20).

Later in the interview S2 discussed how much he valued the oral communication and writing classes in his university. He said, "Oral communication's good for me because my TOEIC listening skill increased . . . about 100. I was so surprised" (EC_Interview_S2. lines 35-39). When asked to account for this increase in score, he mentioned that he did not like studying outside of the class. He mentioned his experience in the oral communication class and how he liked to listen to music in English and watch YouTube and English Central for fun (EC_Interview_S2, lines 41-49) :

41	S2 :	yeah I I didn't have opportunities to speak English in class but in the class we could speak English so it was fun
42	IN :	please tell me more why do you think what did you do to make your listening points go up
43	**S2 :**	**you know I don't like study so in my home, i I did just watching English movies or English songs and English Central**
44	IN :	okay how many hours per day do you think you were studying on your own at home English
45	S2 :	no
46	IN :	no hours
47	S2 :	yeah
48	IN :	but watching movies and other things is it's practice right
49	S2 :	yeah but I don't think so I I don't like study so I don't like just feeling to study **so it's not practice just make just have fun to watch movies and yes**

S2 explained in the above excerpt that while he was using EC, watching YouTube in English, and listening to English music, he was only doing this for pleasure. He did not view these activities as a chance to practice his English skills. In contrast to what he said in line 49, when asked how he planned to study or practice his listening skills now that he no longer had access to EC, he stated that he would often watch movies in English with Japanese subtitles. He suggested here that he does not consider watching movies an educational opportunity, but he always uses subtitles to check his listening comprehension and confirm his predictions (EC_Interview_S2, lines 110-120) :

110	IN :	okay so instead of English central what will you do to practice your listening skills.
111	**S2 :**	**listening skills I frequently ((watch)) English movies but I think that's it**
112	IN :	okay when you're watching an English movie how do you help yourself understand it?
113	**S2 :**	**The interruption is sometimes different from my guess.**
114	IN :	interruption?
115	S2 :	in interpretation

116 IN： interpretation! that it. translation
117 IN： okay so you watch it with Japanese subtitles
118 S2： yes
119 IN： always?
120 S2： always.

In regards to S3's high school learning experiences, she was already a self-motivated and self-regulated learner. She mentioned that she took elective English writing classes in her high school years in order to prepare for university. She also attended *juku* lessons in her junior high school years to prepare for high school. However, she confessed to rarely using YouTube or other materials to practice learning English outside of the classroom in high school.

While in her first year at university, her opinions toward studying English changed. When asked if she always felt that EC was a valuable tool from the beginning of the school year, she explained that in the spring semester, she thought EC was just another assignment (lines 125-126). She was only doing the assignment in order to meet the requirements of the course (line 130), but in the fall semester, she grew to see the intrinsic value in watching the videos and began to watch them for enjoyment and skill practice (lines 134-135, 140).

124 S3： umm . . . hmmm . . . in Spring
125   I thought it was only homework and
126   First I I thought is a little- *chotto mendokusai* ((a little troublesome))
127   Yeah, but hmmm
128   In the fall semester I
129   I watched so many movies and at first I
130   watched these movies to raise my score
131   but
132 IN： Your score in my class?
133 S3： ((laughter)) Oh, yeah
134   But I found this the movies are good for my knowledge and
135   And also it's raised my English skill, so I'm interested in-
136   In recent, more so
137   yeah, it is changed because first I watched for score and-
138   Through the years I am I finally
139   Did increase into homework ((I think she means she watched additional videos))
140   not homework, for my skill. So it's big change

This description is a clear example of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation. S3 realized that the goals set by the instructor of the course were valuable and she internalized them. She set her own goals and began using the application for her own purposes as well as to satisfy the requirements of the course. She showed self-reflection and reflection on the materials by discussing the perceived value of the application and how using EC affected her speaking and listening skills. In Lines 87-93, S3 discussed the value of the listening and speaking practice provided by EC and the

in-class activities on her own English skills. :

87	S3 :	I watched the English central movies and
88		After after we watch the English central movies
89		we summarized movies and talk each other with our classmates
90		**This opportunity help helped me to become more** . . . speak . . . how do I say
91		**Yeah, these opportunities**
92		**Made me more**
93		**more speak English fluently**
94	IN :	to help you speak more fluently

RQ 3 : In what ways did students using EC show evidence of untrained self-regulation?

Even though she seemed to be only using EC to complete the required, externally set goals of the course, S1 did show some evidence of self-regulation while using the app. She referred to adjusting her study strategies in order to meet the goals of the course. She found that even though she wanted to watch easier videos and practice her listening skills, she had to choose more difficult videos in order to study the 50 vocabulary words required by the course curriculum. The bolded excerpt in lines 137 and 144 showed the extent to which she changed her study strategies (EC_Interview_S1, lines 135-144) :

135	S1 :	To meet the goals of the words
136	IN :	Hmm the vocabulary goals
137	**S1 :**	**I have to watch higher level videos**
138		That's why I, I can I cannot understand *sono toki-* directly.
139	IN :	Oh, I see.
140	S1 :	Hmm ((yes))
141	IN :	That's interesting because English central is supposed to be, watch many easy videos
142	S1 :	*Un.*(yes.)
143	IN :	To practice listening-
144	**S1 :**	**But to meet the goals of the course**
145	IN :	I see.

However, later in the same section she discussed what she needed to do when she encountered other problems. In lines 146-150, S1 detailed how she needed to lower the difficulty level of her videos in order to comprehend the content and complete the dictations. She realized that had to change her study plan, from watching easy videos to watch higher level videos on English Central in order to meet the vocabulary goals of the curriculum, but found that those videos and dictation activities were too difficult, so she concluded that she *should* have been watching the easier videos.

| 146 | IN : | Can you tell me anything else about English central? |
| 147 | S1 : | These days I found I found that *nante itai kana* (what should I say?) |

148   To understand directly the video, I

149   *nani iushitai ga ii* (What would be best to say?)

**150   I had I had better choose the easy level because I can dictation *nani ga yuttai*
         (what do I want to say?)**

This excerpt points to a conflict between the course goals for vocabulary learning and the implicit goals of extensive listening. She wanted to watch easy videos which is more in line with extensive listening, but to meet the externally determined goals of vocabulary study, she had to adjust her strategies in order to encounter enough difficult vocabulary. This adjustment caused her global comprehension problems.

In the next section of the interview, S2 discussed what he found difficult regarding EC and how he dealt with those difficulties. In line 58, he candidly explained his own perceived failures as a student who was unable to regulate his own learning, but then went on to illustrate a prime example of self-regulation (lines 64-66). He discussed a strategy adjustment ; instead of completing the required goals every week, he completed the entire semesters' goals in one weekend.

53   IN : What was difficult in particular?

54   S2 : The quantity

55   IN : What do you mean?

56   S2 : Amount we have to do

57   IN : The required 5 videos 50 words 50 ((lines)). why was it difficult?

58   S2 : I don't have studying habit so regularly studying

59   IN : So let me kind of summarize you think that English Central is good-

60   S2 : Yeah

61   IN : A good application but only for very motivated students

62   S2 : Yes I think so

63   IN : For someone like you it's not so good

64   S2 : Yeah I I did all of English central in two days

65   IN : Yes Oh at the very beginning

66   S2 : Yeah and the other day I did nothing.

67   IN : So you did everything first and then you did nothing for the rest of the semester

68   S2 : Yes

For a student who claimed to have no motivation or ambition, he was certainly self-reflective and aware of his own shortcomings. After realizing that his usual study approaches would not work for this assignment (self-reflection), he set a goal for himself－complete all of his work for the whole semester as soon as possible. He was aware of his own study habits enough to develop a new strategy that would allow him to meet the requirements of the course. This excerpt provides evidence that S2 set goals for himself, reflected on his own abilities and shortcomings, used strategies to achieve those goals, and adjusted his strategies to new situations ; all of which are essential aspects of a self-regulated language learner. It also shows that S2 was not viewing EC as an opportunity for listening practice, extensive listening, or even skill development. Nor was he viewing this

assignment as opportunity to become a more autonomous learner. If he were, he would have continued to use EC even after he accomplished the course requirements, but as evidenced in line 66, he did nothing during the rest of the semester after completing the course requirements. This strategy and strategy adjustment were solely to achieve the minimum points required for the course.

Later in the interview, when asked what advice he would give to his *kohai* (underclassmen) regarding how to use EC, he said that they should do EC following the correct method－five videos, 50 words, and 50 lines spoken every week. He was aware that his strategy was not conducive to learning for most people, even though it was successful for him and recommended that future students using EC should use the program as designed for best results (EC_ Interview_S2, Line 142-150) :

142	**S2 : I I did all in two days but I did I didn't cheating. so I did correct method in correct method so I think my English skills improved so-**
143	IN : In two days?
144	**S2 : In two days. I think so because it I had English in the whole day so my kohais have to do normal**
145	IN : They should do it normally?
146	**S2 : yeah every week. yes someone ((talking about some students in class)) did like cheating**
147	IN : Can you explain
148	S2 : Starting movie up videos and do something else
149	IN : Do you think that many students did that?
150	S2 : Not not not many

His comment at the end of this excerpt regarding cheating referred to students who abused the EC system and got credit for watching a video, while not actually watching it. The system awards points for completion as well as comprehension and vocabulary words studied. I occasionally witnessed students turning on an EC video and putting their phones down to do something else until the video finished, then returning to the app to complete the other tasks. This topic also came up with S1 after I turned off the IC recorder. She explained to me that at least one of her friends in the class used this method to meet the requirements of the course. This type of behavior is not uncommon with autonomous learning situations. Educators using extensive reading and listening programs have been trying to find ways to balance student freedom and academic honesty for decades. While interesting, this research was not intended to address this problem of autonomous and self-regulated learning.

Finally when I asked S3 was asked how she used EC and what kind of strategies she employed to better understand the videos she was watching, she gave similar answers to S2 and S1. She (a) watched the videos entirely, (b) tried to complete the dictation activities, (c) practiced the speaking. Though the order of the tasks can be changed, this is the flow that the application follows. All three participants reported using the touch input to pause the input to check for comprehension and guessing from context (EC_Interview_S3, lines 154-159) :

154   S3 : **I touched the word I couldn't understand while listening part**
155   I touch the word and
156   understand the meaning and of course the
157   word, which was blank and I
158   dictated. and if I couldn't understand the meaning of
159   the blank word, I **touched it and I understand the meaning to so**

At the end of the interview, S3 offered advice to any student who will be using EC in future classes. In lines 238-242 she said, "Doing English Central homework is a great opportunity to practice your English skills and, yes, it's very worth you doing. So, please don't give up and keep trying to do the homework." There are a few conclusions to be drawn from this final send off. First, even after one year of using the application, S3 still viewed EC as a homework assignment rather than an opportunity to study English autonomously. Second, that being said, she still found value in using the application to improve her language skills. Third, she recognized that the task will be difficult for others but persevering through the hardship would be worth it in the end.

Discussion

All the students interviewed showed signs of untrained self-regulation. Each student was able to set immediate goals, use learning strategies, adjust those strategies, and reflect upon what they had done well and what had gone poorly. Regarding S1, her strategy of watching challenging videos in order to kill two birds with one stone left her with a sour taste in her mouth regarding EC. As a result, she felt that the vocabulary requirement in the course curriculum was too demanding. However, she realized that in the end, this strategy was not beneficial to her language learning. If EC is being used to provide and track listening input suitable for extensive listening, then an extensive vocabulary requirement imposed on the students might cause others to follow S1's strategy. This would come in conflict with the fundamental tenet of extensive listening. S1's actual EC usage data mirrors what she discussed in the interview. Regarding the class requirements for the entire semester, she watched 42 of 50 videos, tested 276 of 500 vocabulary words, and repeated 548 of 500 spoken lines. It is easy to see from this data that she clearly valued the speaking practice, and encountered difficulty finishing the vocabulary and video requirements. S1's self-regulation and strategy use in an autonomous learning situation echoes the warnings given by Ertürk (2016), some students may not know what to do with all the autonomy they are given without some guidance from the teacher.

S2 also showed a remarkable amount of self-regulation. He designed and executed a study plan on his own in order to accomplish the goals of the course. It takes a dedicated student to watch 50 videos, study 500 vocabulary words, and practice speaking 500 lines in one weekend. From a pedagogical perspective, this was not a beneficial strategy for language learners to employ and S2 acknowledged this at the end of the interview when he urged future students to complete the EC goals week-by-week. Curious to see if S2 only used EC to meet the requirements, I also evaluated his EC usage data as well. He completed 65 of 50 videos, studied 810 of 500 vocabulary words, and spoke 750 of 500 lines. Even though S2 believed that he was an unmotivated student, his usage data tells a different story. He completed at least 50 percent more work than was required of him throughout the semester. This data does not seem to support the narrative that S2 told about himself in the in-

terview. Clearly he continued to work on EC over the course of the semester which caused him to complete more than necessary. When S2 said in line 43 of his interview, "you know I don't like study, so in my home, I I did just watching English movies or English songs and English Central," perhaps he did not view EC as a just a requirement for the course anymore after having met the requirements, but started to see it as a fun way to spend time.

S3 had the most positive opinion of EC from the outset. She noticed early on in the interview that EC was a valuable tool to practice her language skills. She used it appropriately and met all the goals of the course in a timely manner. While in her interview, she only discussed topics related to self-regulation and strategy use a few times, she was clearly a self-motivated and exceptional student. Upon examining her EC usage data, it is easy to see she, like S2, enjoyed using the application and her interview supported this conclusion. She completed 88 of 50 videos, studied 727 of 500 vocabulary words, and spoke 699 of 500 lines.

Certainly these students could have benefited from self-regulation training on par with Lee and Cha's (2017) self-regulation log book study and recommendations set forth by Zimmerman (2002) and Ertürk (2016). However, even without a proscriptive training regimen of metacognitive strategy use and self-reflection, these three students were able to show clear examples of goal setting, self-reflection, strategy use, and strategy adaptation to varying degrees.

Conclusion

In this interview-based phenomenological study, I examined how self-regulation manifested in three university freshmen who participated in a one year online, autonomous language learning situation with no explicit training in strategy use and motivation management. Results of the interviews showed that even though the participants were not trained how to regulate their own learning, they all developed and used strategies to cope with tasks set upon them. The externally imposed goals and requirements loomed over them throughout the semester. For some, those goals were difficult to achieve, but for others, those goals were guideposts on the road to autonomy.

There are a number of obvious limitations to the present study. First, the interviews were conducted with a small subsection of a small, highly motivated, proficient group of international studies students at a small private university in Japan. Additionally, all of the participants interviewed in the study were my former students. It is possible that they were telling me what I wanted to hear. While I do not believe this to be the case, as evidenced by the confession-like admission made by some of the participants regarding their study habits, it is still a possible threat to validity. Finally, the second research question was poorly developed and could not be adequately investigated due to the lack of interview questions which explored a causal link between EC use and a change in study habits. The best that can be hoped for is to see an emerging pattern after introducing EC.

That being said, the current study provides a basic framework from which future investigations can be started. Future studies should examine in more detail how explicit self-regulation training can affect EC users' self-efficacy, motivation, willingness to communicate, and perception of autonomy. Additionally, EC should be evaluated as an autonomous learning tool in greater detail. How do users use the application when given complete autonomy versus varying degrees of regulation, e.g. self-determined weekly goals, no goals at all, and teacher-set goals?

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